



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF HEALTH  
*1102 SE Quince Street • PO Box 47990  
Olympia, Washington 98504-7990*

September 12, 2001

TO: Washington State Board of Health Members  
FROM: Carl Osaki, Member  
RE: Update on Food Safety in Adult Family Homes

**Background and Summary:**

The Board most recently became engaged in the issue of food safety in adult family homes (AFH) in October 2000, when it received a petition from a representative of the adult family home community to repeal WAC 246-217-010. The petition argued that the Adult Family Home community was not properly included in the rulemaking process and that the Department of Health (DOH) did not follow the appropriate process.

This issue was discussed before the Board at the November 8, 2000 meeting. The Board decided to deny the petition on the finding that DOH did follow the appropriate protocol and that the rule was properly adopted. At its November 2000 meeting, the Board asked DOH to solicit broad-based input regarding the level of food safety training necessary to protect the health of residents in adult family homes and to report recommendations to the Board by May 2001. Since this time, a series of events have occurred that are relevant to the Board's action on this issue.

During the legislative session, the Board worked with Representative Edmonds, DOH, DSHS, and the adult family home lobbyists to negotiate acceptable language to Section 9 of Substitute House Bill 1320 and Senate Bill 5521 relating to food handling practices in adult family homes. The revised language would have exempted adult family home providers, managers, and employees from obtaining food handler permits as currently required under WAC 246-217-010. This group proposed an amendment that would ensure that workers in adult family homes get adequate food handler training (pursuant to 69.09 RCW) through the already required Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) education program. At the March 14, 2001 Board meeting, the Board approved a motion requiring DOH and DSHS to report to the Board by September 2001 on their joint agency efforts to assure food handler training for food workers in adult family homes.

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In May 2001, Governor Locke vetoed this revised language, reinforcing the need for employees of adult family homes to obtain food worker cards pursuant to the Board's rule. The veto language is attached for your reference.

On July 26<sup>th</sup>, Mary Selecky and I met with Board Staff, DOH staff, and DSHS staff to discuss food safety in adult family homes and the significance of the Governor's veto. The group agreed that food workers in adult family homes continue to be subject to requirements outlined in WAC 246-217-010 with no exceptions. They also agreed that DSHS and DOH would work together on a letter that will be sent to all AFH operators in the state reminding them of their obligation to comply with the Board's rule related to food handler cards. The attached letter to Lou Dooley, Chair of the Washington State Association of Local Public Health Officials summarizes this meeting.

**Recommended Board Motions:**

*No action recommended.*